

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Alaska is recognized to speak for up to 10 minutes.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I have several things I want to discuss this morning. I have some charts, and I want to proceed as the charts are put up.

#### TRIBUTE TO U.S. COAST GUARDSMEN

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I believe I have the unique distinction of being the only current Member of this body who has served in the U.S. Coast Guard, so as a consequence I rise today to pay tribute to three brave young men who perished early yesterday off the coast of Washington State.

Petty Officer 2d Class David Bosley of Coronado, CA; Petty Officer 3d Class Matthew Schlimme of Whitewater, MO; and Seaman Clinton Miniken of Snohomish, WA, were serving aboard a 44-foot motor lifeboat stationed on the Pacific Ocean coast of Washington State's Olympic Peninsula.

Early yesterday morning they took their vessel out to answer a distress call from two people aboard a sailboat in trouble in heavy seas. Tragically, the 44-footer capsized and three brave men died. Only one crewman, Seaman Apprentice Benjamin Wingo of Bremerton, WA, survived to reach the rocky shoreline and safety.

Some of my colleagues have heard me address this body in the past to give tribute to successful rescues made by Coast Guard personnel in dangerous situations where they themselves were placed in serious jeopardy by their effort to save others. Most such rescues end happily. This one—tragically—did not.

We pay formal tribute to those members of the military who fall in the line of duty while fighting our Nation's enemies. I hope the Members of this body will take just a moment to reflect on the sacrifice of these three young Coast Guardsmen. They, too, perished in the line of duty, fighting to protect human life.

The Coast Guard motto, "Semper Paratus," means "Always Prepared." Sometimes, it means being prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice.

#### INTERIM STORAGE OF RADIOACTIVE WASTE

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, a very serious situation exists in our Nation that I would like to discuss with my colleagues today. It concerns the storage of nuclear waste that has been generated in conjunction with the operation of nuclear reactors that provide this Nation with about 22 percent of the power generation that we currently enjoy. Without this contribution from the nuclear industry, we would have to depend on some other form of generation to contribute that 22 percent. We would probably use more coal,

perhaps more natural gas. The potential for developing more hydro is somewhat limited, based on the costs and the fact that most of the potential hydro sites have already been developed. I happen to be chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, which has the obligation to oversee our country's electricity industry. It is an industry that most Americans take for granted. We are used to plugging in the iron, plugging in the coffee pot, and having them work. We do not recognize and we do not really reflect on what is behind it—the people, the men and women working in the power generating business, the business of transmitting the electric energy, distributing it and making sure it works.

In any event, in connection with the tremendous dependence we have on nuclear energy in this country—I might add, we are the largest consumers of nuclear generated energy of any nation in the world—I was staggered to read that the Senate-White House meeting which was held yesterday resulted in agreement on some issues, but no agreement to address the question of what to do with the nuclear waste generated by our power reactors.

I think a headline should have read, "The Clinton Administration Simply Wants to Keep the Status Quo." Keeping nuclear waste in the neighborhoods of our country, and the consequences of that, deserve some examination. This examination could start in your town, in your State, in your neighborhood. That is where it is being stored. High-level radioactive materials are piling up in 80 locations in 41 of our States. Onsite storage is filling up, and the States which control the ability of utilities to store nuclear waste on the reactor sites will have to address whether they want to increase onsite storage at the nuclear reactors, or whether they will give in to pressure to simply not allow any further storage beyond the limited amount of existing storage.

Some see this as a way to shut down the nuclear industry in this country. By objecting to any increase in authority to store onsite, the reactors can be forced to shut down because there is no place to put the spent fuel.

I have a chart which I am going to spend a few minutes on, because it shows the crucial nature of the problem. When the administration says, "We will just leave it where it is," I suggest to you, Mr. President, that this is an unrealistic and unworkable alternative. By 1998, 23 reactors in 14 States will run out of storage space. What we have here are plants with adequate storage, and they are indicated in the light blue. You can see most of them are on the eastern seaboard. But in purple are plants requiring additional storage by the year 2010. These States all have plants in purple: California, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, North and South Carolina, and all up and down the east coast. These plants do not

have adequate storage to hold waste within the areas immediately adjacent to the reactors, and are going to have to petition the States to increase the authorization for nuclear energy waste allowed to be stored at those sites. In the green are plants requiring additional storage by the year 2015. They are primarily on the eastern seaboard and the Midwestern States, such as Illinois.

So the point of this chart is to highlight that additional nuclear waste storage is needed in this country now. The bill we have introduced in our committee, S. 104, would provide a real solution to this crisis that is coming down the track. It is a train wreck that is coming. We have this material at 80 locations in 41 States. The Federal Government entered into a contractual commitment with America's ratepayers who depend on nuclear energy and the nuclear generation industry. In return for over \$12 billion ratepayer dollars, the Government committed to take this waste by the year 1998. This is less than 1 year away; it is about 10 months away. The Federal Government has no place to put this waste and will default on its contractual commitment in 1998, when it is obligated to take the waste.

There has been an effort to provide this Nation with a permanent repository. The government has a study program under way at Yucca Mountain, NV. We have spent \$6 billion on this effort, but that facility will not be ready for 15 years, at the earliest. Secretary O'Leary said it may be 20 years. It may be longer. But the point is, we are looking at somewhere in the area of 2015 or thereabouts, and where in the world are we going to be able to accommodate this waste? Because we are not going to have a permanent repository then. We may never have a permanent repository, and I will talk about that a little later.

S. 104 is a bill that got 63 votes in this body last year. The bill would provide for construction of a temporary storage facility, either at the Nevada test site or another site chosen by the President and Congress, until such time as we have a permanent repository constructed.

Why the Nevada test site? The geologists tell us it is the best site that has been identified for a permanent repository. Furthermore, it is a site where for over 50 years we have tested our nuclear weapons. It is a site that is monitored and secured. It is a site that is well known. And it is the most appropriate site that has been identified.

Now, the bottom line with this whole issue, Mr. President, is nobody wants nuclear waste. But you cannot throw it up in the air. It will come down somewhere. So the question is, what do you do with it? Again, last year, 63 Members of this body indicated that they approved of the construction of a temporary repository at the Nevada test site because it would allow us to proceed with the permanent repository,